

National Watermelon Promotion Board Holds September 30th, 2006 Convention to Nominate Producers and Handlers to Serve as District 6 Board Members

Contact: William H. Winsemann, III
NWPB Director of Industry Affairs

August 30, 2006

ABILENE, TX – The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) will hold a nomination convention Saturday, September 30th 2006 at 10:30 a.m. at the Civic Plaza Hotel, 505 Pine Street in Abilene, to nominate qualified watermelon producers and watermelon handlers to serve as board members for District 6 of the Board. District 6 is comprised of The counties in the state of Texas, except for Armstrong, Bailey, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Cochran, Collingsworth, Cottle, Crosby, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Dickens, Donley, Floyd, Garza, Gray, Hale, Hall, Hansford, Hartely, Hemphill, Hockely, Hutchinson, Kent, King, Lamb, Lipscomb, Lubbock, Lynn, Moore, Motley, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Stonewall, Swisher, Terry, Wheeler and Yoakum.

The NWPB encourages all women, minorities and persons with disabilities who qualify as watermelon producers and handlers to attend the meeting and run for nomination to the NWPB.

All watermelon producers and handlers in District 6 are encouraged to attend and vote to nominate their representatives to the NWPB. Nominations are submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Secretary of Agriculture makes the final appointments to the NWPB. The newly appointed Board members will take office on January 1, 2007 and serve until December 31, 2009.

The Board members administers promotion and research programs for watermelon. The NWPB works to increase consumer demand for watermelon and expand domestic and foreign markets through its marketing, consumer public relations and education programs. The non-profit Board works with an administrative staff to enact retail, foodservice and media promotions and research programs.

All Board members are required to attend two meetings each year to become familiar with and develop the Board's variety of marketing, research and education programs.

About 2,200 commercial watermelon producers, handlers and importers make up the membership of the NWPB and finance all of the Board's programs through assessments on watermelons as authorized by the Watermelon Research and Promotion Act. The 36-member Board is currently comprised of 14 producers, 14 handlers, 6 importers, an ex officio member and a member who represents the public.

(more)

District 6 Nomination Meeting—p.2

Board members are nominated by their peers, and nominations are submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, who makes final appointments to the Board. These board members oversee all aspects of the Board, including setting policies and deciding how the Board's budget is invested in promotion, research and education programs. The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors the Board's operations.

To be eligible for nomination, producers must grow 10 or more acres of watermelon, and handlers must be the first handler of watermelon, according to §1210.306 and §1210.308 of the Watermelon Research and Promotion Plan.

The NWPB will allow proxy voting for Board nominees. Individuals wishing to vote by proxy should prepare signed, dated statements, including the proxy voter's printed name, address, identity as a producer or handler, and the name of the individual authorized to cast the proxy vote. These statements should be given to those authorized to cast the proxy vote, who will then provide the statements to the NWPB no later than September 30th, 2006.

The producers and handlers appointed to the Board will represent the NWPB's interests throughout the district in meetings and other forums, and should be dedicated to supporting the Board's marketing, promotion, research and education programs.

Additional information regarding the elections and nomination procedures may be obtained by contacting the NWPB Director of Industry Affairs William (Bill) Winsemann or Industry Affairs Associate Andrea Smith toll-free at (877) 599-9595.

#####